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Atari Online News, Etc.
A-ONE Online Magazine
Dana P. Jacobson, Publisher/Managing Editor
Joseph Mirando, Managing Editor
Rob Mahlert, Associate Editor

Atari Online News, Etc. Staff

Dana P. Jacobson -- Editor
Joe Mirando -- "People Are Talking"
Michael Burkley -- "Unabashed Atariophile"
Albert Dayes -- CC: Classic Chips
Rob Mahlert -- Web site

With Contributions by:

Peter A. West
Kevin Savetz
Martin-Eric Racine

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~ Windows-Linux Virus! ~ Jinnee 2.5 News! ~ Scripter News!
~ Electronic Rights Case ~ Kids Privacy Ignored? ~ 'Lion' Worm Found!
~ DHCP Client Available ~ IBM/Nazi Suit Dropped ~ HTMLGen Released!

-* Napster Finding Loopholes?!? *-
-* PC Price War Getting More Cutthroat *-
-* House Committee Approves Anti-Spam Bill! *-

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->From the Editor's Keyboard "Saying it like it is!"
"""""""""""""""""""""""""""""

Okay, I realize that April 1st is just around the corner. I realize that we've had quite a few April Fool's stories in the past that have riled some of our readers (we do _not_ have any this year!); but c'mon, this is getting beyond funny! This weather! What is going on here in New England?? Another 3-4 inches of snow this morning and then torrential rain this afternoon and tonight!? It's supposed to be Spring! I'm really, REALLY beginning to get ticked off at Mother Nature! I cannot take any more of this stuff. And, I refuse to shovel any more of it. Inside, we're dry, but everything outside is saturated; the rivers are cresting again. I'm sure the neighborhood will be full of lakes and rivers by morning. I want to see the sun and feel some warmth!

So, have I conveyed a warm and fuzzy feeling this week? <grin> Nothing like a lot of bad weather to ruin a good mood. Fortunately, there hasn't been a lot going on this week for me to really get going editorially. So, I should probably stop short here before taking on some innocent news item. Next week will be better; I can only hope!

Until next time...

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New Programs In English

Atari Workshop announce the release of three new program bundles, all in English and with full English documentation:

HDDRIVER 8 - The Hard Disk Driver by Uwe Seimet

The most prominent features of HDDRIVER 8:

* Supports all Ataris, the Milan and MagiCMac as well as MagicPC. For MagiCMac and MagicPC the SCSI Driver for these platforms by Steffen Engel is required. Note: Under MagiCPC depending on the hardware and the SCSI Driver's version crashes were observed when starting HDDRIVER from within the AUTO folder. Unfortunately a further analysis of this problem has yielded no result. So please first test the demo version and/or start HDDRIVER from the desktop.

* Driver for Atari SH/Megafile, SCSI-1/SCSI-2/SCSI-3/Ultra-SCSI and IDE/EIDE/Ultra-DMA/ATAPI drives. Works with all kinds of hard disk drives and removable media drives (MOD, PD, DVD-RAM, SyQuest, Nomai, EZ, ZIP, JAZ, LS-120, ...).
* No upper limit for the drive capacity. For drives with a capacity > 1 GByte, Atari STs and STEs require an ICD-compatible SCSI host adapter, e.g. the LINK97.
* Runs on every Atari and on the Milan.
  Note: The Hades is not officially supported. Due to bugs in the processor cache handling of the Hades' BIOS the proper working of HDDRIVER cannot be guaranteed. Hades users have to try the demo version first before ordering HDDRIVER or updates.
* Special functions (Auto-Sleep, Auto-Park, Password Protection) for ZIP and JAZ drives as well as CPX for configuring ZIP and JAZ.
* Automatic, secure recognition of media changes.
* Support for DOS/Windows compatible media guarantees an easy data exchange between TOS, DOS/Windows and MacOS.
* DOS/Windows compatible partitioning (including FAT32) directly with the Atari.
* VFAT or FAT32 partitions (long filenames, virtually unlimited partition size) with MagiC or MiNT.
* With MiNT access to Atari and PC compatible Linux partitions, resulting in an easy data exchange between the Atari and any Linux-based system.
* With MagiC or MiNT 23 partitions or more at the same time.
* Non-blocking SCSI and ACSI transfers with MagiC. Applications keep on running while data are being transferred.
* Reconstruction of partition data in case the root sector was corrupted.
* Compatible with the latest XHDI standard 1.30, with support for all optional functions.
* Compatible with the latest SCSI Driver standard 1.01 for low level access to SCSI, IDE and ATAPI peripherals (CD-ROM, CD-Writer, scanner, streamer etc.), including SCSI target interface.
* Write protection for particular partitions and for boot and root sectors.
* SCSI initiator identification and bus arbitration ensures highest compatibility with the SCSI standard.
* Error statistics
* Boots from any partition
* Arbitrary device order
* Parameters of SCSI and ATAPI devices can be configured, e. g. the cache settings.
* The HDDRIVER package includes several useful tools.
* All programs are bilingual (German and English).
* The 42-page English manual (available *only* from Atari Workshop) includes a useful introduction to hard disks in general.

Price: 29.95 (UKP) (around $43, depending on current rate of exchange)
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Atari Workshop, PO Box 3766, Bracknell, Berks RG42 7YL, UK
Telephone: +44 1344 890008 Fax: +44 1344 890009
Web:http://www/atari-workshop.co.uk

jinnee 2.5 - The Ultimate Atari Desktop by Manfred Lippert

jinnee is the most versatile desktop replacement for the Atari platform. It is particularly suitable for use with MagiC, but can be used without
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if WDIALOG.PRG (supplied) is installed in the AUTO folder.
Requires at least 1 MB memory and a hard disk and works in resolutions
of 640*200 (ST-medium) and higher.

Here’s just a taster of what jinnee offers:

* Icons for files, folders and programs from the desktop.
* Text or icon display in directory windows.
* Special icons can be linked to filetypes or individual applications.
* Hundreds of icons included, in color and monochrome.
* Various styles of images as desktop backgrounds.
* Wide choice of colors for particular filetypes.
* Optional color patterns for window backgrounds.
* Drag&Drop for files and folders.
* Launching up to 50 applications via keyboard shortcuts.
* Output of directories via GEMDOS or NVDI.
* Fast file copy, format, delete and move, optionally using Kobold.
* Automatic window size handling.
* Mac OS8-style spring-loaded folders.
* Hierarchical folder display in text mode.
* Copying of file lists via menus (like Windows95).
* Notepad for ’PostIt’ style notes on the desktop.
* Recoverable wastebin.
* Context-sensitive menus.
* Extendable functions by user-programmed Plugins (many supplied).
* Archiving/dearchiving of files compressed by almost any Atari archiver
  directly from the desktop if Scripter (see below) is loaded.
* Many packing/unpacking programs supplied.
* A large range of useful PD/Shareware utilities (not only for jinnee)
  nearly all in English with English documentation (text or HYP):

Appline	Installs a button bar at the bottom edge of the screen in which all running (GEM-)programs are listed
Bubble	On-screen bubble help, used by many other programs
Deskdrop	
Dock	Lists all running apps and open windows on desktop
Finder	Finds files and strings in them and lists them
LPR	Prints ASCII files via GDOS
Menu3D	Menus and submenus in 3D-look (if system supports this)
Keywatch	Program-independent keyboard shortcuts
Menubar	Extends MagiC with special functions for the menu bar
MKey	Keyboard operation of menus under MagiC
Ratsch	Tear-off menus under MagiC
Trapper	A program that greatly simplifies the development of system extensions by programmers
WFName	Extends MagiC by permitting other programs to establish the window title of any window
Start Me Up	The Windows95 Start button for MultiTOS-compatible operating systems
ST-Guide	The leading hypertext help system used by many programs
Suji	Very versatile file and string locator with selectable listing order (by name, size, date, origin)
SysSound	Adds sounds to certain desktop operations

* Simple installation with GEMSetup.
* Much, much more.

Supplied with 122 page illustrated spiral-bound English manual
(available *only* from Atari Workshop).

Price: 29.95 (UKP), or 49.95 (UKP) with Scripter (around $43 or $73)
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Atari Workshop, PO Box 3766, Bracknell, Berks RG42 7YL, UK
Telephone: +44 1344 890008 Fax: +44 1344 890009
Web:http://www/atari-workshop.co.uk

Scripter, by Holger Weets

Scripter a scripting language that can automate frequently occurring tasks, 'talking' with applications via a communication interface called 'GEMscript', and can remote control them, so to speak, if they support it. Such an application practically widens the range of Scripter's language by one or more procedures, which it then executes on request. Scripter interfaces particularly well with jinnee.

There are many scripting languages, such as awk, perl, javascript etc., and often application programs such as text processors, terminal programs and others also have their own scripting language. Particularly with these built-in script languages it can be quite a burden having to learn a new language for each application. That is the reason why they are frequently not used properly.

Compared to a built-in scripting language, Scripter offers many advantages both for the user and for the programmer:

* You only need to learn one language.
* It is appreciably easier to develop a script-controlled application.
* Scripts can be written that remote control several applications simultaneously.
* The language can also be used without any application programs.
* You can record non-application-specific macros.

Features:

* Several scripts can be executed at the same time; they then run with pre-emptive multitasking, so to speak simultaneously (even under TOS).
* C-like syntax.
* Extendible with plugins and libraries.
* Functions with variable number of parameters.
* Recursion.
* Supports the new standard communications interface GEMscript.
* Floating point numbers with any desired precision.
* Associative arrays.
* Fast (scripts are translated to an intermediate code).

Supplied with many useful working scripts which can be used as examples for programming your own as well, and English ST-Guide hypertext manual.

Price: 24.95 (UKP), or 49.95 (UKP) with jinnee (around $36 / $73)

Atari Workshop, PO Box 3766, Bracknell, Berks RG42 7YL, UK
Telephone: +44 1344 890008 Fax: +44 1344 890009
Web:http://www/atari-workshop.co.uk

Recorded delivery airmail and packing UKP 10 (around $14.50) extra per package despatched (whether for one, two or all three of these programs).

Mastercard and Visa accepted. Non-UK prices will depend on the current sterling exchange rate. US Dollar prices quoted are at present rate.

Regards, /Peter/
(Peter A. West, London)

HTMLGen Released

The first version of the mini HTML generator Atari HTMLGen was released. It's a port from the original Perl-based HTML Generator HTMLGen.PL.

The object of Atari HTMLGen is to make web pages fast with a well defined structure (header, body and footer). You can use the main HTML tags (title, subtitle, images) with the main menu or you can write your own HTML code with the built in text editor. It works on any Atari ST system.

http://hfa.linuxpersonal.com/htmlgen

MiNT-Net: DHCP Client Available

Hello!

After a week of hacking headers and making localized tests, I have finally managed to compile the DHCP client/server/relay suite for MiNT-Net.

This was a gruesome effort that required several clarifications from the package's original author before it successfully made it into binary form but, basically, it is now available.

Anyone interested in beta-testing my port before the "official" release should contact me directly via e-mail.

Following those tests, assuming positive results, the archive will be packaged into a SpareMiNT RPM and other more polished formats better suited for widespread distribution.

Regards,
--
Martin-Eric Racine, IT Consultant * http://funkyware.atari.org/
* May the Funk be with Q! * Author of the Atari TT030 Homepage.

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING

compiled by Joe Mirando
jmirando@portone.com

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. I'm going to tell you right up front that this is going to be a short column.

It’s been one heck of a week. I’ve been working harder than usual and for for more hours than usual, and I’m not as young as I used to be. This stuff is catching up with me.

I haven’t really got anything deep, or even especially interesting, to say this week, so I’ll be merciful and get to the ’meat and potatoes’ of the column quickly. I figure that you’ve probably had a tough week too.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup

Lyndon Amsdon asks about which software should be installed first:

"Atari Workshop just sent me my lovely new software which is Magic , NVDI 5, Jinne 2.5 and Scripter.

Main problem is which order to install. I’m thinking,

Magic
NVDI
Jinnee
Scripter

Or should NVDI go first?

I’m gonna have to get started with Scripter but don’t seem to have a manual sent to me. I suppose it’s online then? Came in a strange CD case with a plastic insert for floppys. Never seen this type of packaging before!"

Joshua Kaijankoski tells Lyndon:

"1st Magic 6.1
2nd Jinnee 2.5
3rd NVDI 5.01

works great."

Steve Sweet adds his experiences:

"I’d upgrade Magic, then reboot, just to make sure all is OK.
Now install NVDI and reboot, again just in case.

Now you can install Jinnee, adding, edited to suit your system...

```
#_SHL C:\Jinnee\JINNEE.APP
#_ENV AVSERVER=JINNEE
#_ENV JINNEE=C:\JINNEE\JINNEE.APP
#_ENV GEMSCRIPT=C:\GEMSYS\MAGIC\START\SCRIPTER.PRG
#_ENV HOME=C:\System\
#_ENV PATH=.\;C:\;D:\;E:\;F:\;G:\;H:\;I:\;J:\;K:\;L:\;M:\;N:\
;O:\;P:\;Q:\R:\ ;S:\;T:\;U:\;V:\;W:\;X:\;Y:\Z:\
```

to MAGX.INF. For now you can just click JINNEE.APP to check it is functioning, if it don’t winge reboot again and you’ll come up with Jinnee as your desktop.

Now install scripter, putting it in C:\GEMSYS\MAGIC\START\
also put here the folders and contents of

\BIN
\PLUGIN
\SCRIPTS
\LIBS

Now, when I first installed Jinnee on my system the context popups didn't work properly, so make sure you have the folder structure

C:\Jinnee\Jplugins\context\

and put all Jinnee's .SIC in here, probably found in a folder called zusast.

A hold right click will now give you a popup with the entry PLUGINS at the bottom, the content of this will depend on what was selected when you hold R-click, all will be revealed later.

When you've done this and all seems to work, get back to me, some of the included scripts are poxed, some are duplicated. I'l send you some corrected/modified scripts."

Jo Even Skarstein adds:

"This isn't Windows you know.<grin> It really doesn't matter which order you install it in, but for convenience I'd suggest to install and boot MagiC first, then install the rest of the stuff."

"Goober" asks about swapping media from ST to PC:

"My PC will not read my Atari ST 1040STe floppys, no matter how I format them.

I can format on the pc to 720k or 1.4. Neither works.
Is there any prog or util that can help."

Michael Freeman tells Goober:

"It *should* work if you start by formatting a disk on your PC as a 720Kb, double-sided disk (use specifically 720Kb 2D disks rather than 1.44 Mb HD disks, if you can find them - don't know if HD disks would even work).

Definitely do not format it as a 1.44Mb disk. It should then be usable on both systems. There's also a program (I forget what it's called - anybody remember?) that allows the ST to format PC-compatible disks. It's a matter of some FAT info being slightly different."

Goober now asks:

"I heard of a program called 'Gem explorer'. My PC refuses to do lower capacity (720k) formats of HD floppies. What holes do I cover on the disks to fool it? Anyone know?"

G. Swaine tells Goober:

"Assuming the discs/drives haven't changed in the last few years (I haven't used floppy discs for about 5 years or so)

A 1.4 MB floppy disc is in the same plastic case as the 720k discs, with the same sliding tab used to write-protect the discs.

However, an extra hole has been added to one corner, and it is this hole that the drive uses to detect whether it is a 1.4 MB DSHD disc, or a 720k DSDD disc. (I don't recall there being an easy way to detect if the double-density disc was a single-sided 360k disc peculiar to the ST, or a double-sided 720k disc common to the ST [and the Meagre?] and PC, short of trying to read/write side two)

Covering this hole will generally fool the drive into thinking it is a 720k disc.

The DOS FAT is in roughly the same layout as a 720k disc, only it is larger, as there is twice as much data stored on the disc. There are a few differences with the boot sector of the disc ("media descriptor" used by DOS to determine what kind of disc this is, sectors-per-track [18 instead of 9] are the only two differences that immediately come to mind)

I _think_ the actual disc platter within the plastic case is thinner, and spins a wee bit faster. (What I've read, and been told over the last 15 years on these two points seems to conflict with everything else)

This may upset data reliability, as the drives use a stronger signal to write to the 720k discs, so some data may "leak" through to the other side of the disc, corrupting the data that is already there.

During the early/mid 1990s, I used to write and support a replacement disc formatter/copier for MultiTOS which would work with all sensible ST and PC DOS formats. While it was happier under MultiTOS, it should have run under a smaller SingleTOS system without major problems - I just didn't know anyone with such a system at that time.

If anyone is interested in it, I'll ferret through my backups and see if I still have it (Its development stopped in 1996-ish). Hopefully there should be some details about DOS disc formats with its notes."

Peter West jumps in and adds:

"Some modern PCs seem to have problems formatting DD disks. HD disks can be formatted to DD but I am told the data is not reliable when read on a DD drive (like STs) though it should be OK on the HD drive of a PC.

Actually the relevant difference between the early TOS and DOS disk formats is only in the first two bytes of sector 0. Where Atari had (all values in hex) 00 00 {or there could be instructions to branch to executable code here for self-booting programs such as games} the PC had EB 2C for DOS 2.0, EB 34 for DOS 3.3 and 69 00 on later versions. TOS from 1.04 on formatted disks in a DOS-compatible manner.

If you have a disk monitor/hex editor for the PC you could try changing these first two bytes, after which the PC should be able to read the disks. If you still have the Atari - or can get access to one - there is a PD program DISKMOD.TOS, an ST to IBM Disk modifier by J D Eisenberg which is used together with a file BLOCK0.DAT to write an IBM boot sector to old TOS disks *without losing the contents* (the BLOCK0.DAT file is actually an image of the required boot sector)."

Hallvard Tangeraas adds:

"There are lots of programs that do MSDOS formatting. I've personally used "Hcopy" for years. You can download it from either my Atari launchpad site (the "essential utilities" section I think), or my Notator/Creator SL website ("software" section).

Ever since I came across this program and at the same time found out that the desktop formatter didn't do proper MSDOS I've never formatted again from the TOS desktop -it's slow and incompatible.
I also haven't had any problems using my disks with PCs or Macs."

Bob Retelle adds a fairly important thought to the mix:

"One thing to check when you have problems like this:

Run an Atari virus checker on the disks.

An Atari boot sector virus which in invisible when in the Atari can change the boot sector enough that the PC will not read the disk.

Put the disk in the Atari, you can read the directory just fine. Put it in the PC, it won't even try to read it. Put the disk back in the Atari, you can read the directory just fine. This means the boot sector has been damaged by an Atari virus."

Goober tells everyone who has helped out:

"I've found (after downloading some of utils so helpfully posted) that the atari seems to read the disks more reliably if there are no directories created on it by the PC. Atari created directories seem to read on the PC ok though. I have a 1040 ste 1989."

Chris Martin asks about "popping the top" of his TT030:

"Well, this may seem like a simple question, but I thought I would ask before I blindly go mucking around inside my TT030. How do I open the case? I know that there are 4 screws along the outside edge of the case on the bottom. There are are at least 4 more screws, one big flathead underneath the hard drive. and one that is covered with a sticker that says "warranty void if removed". Hehehe. I am not too worried about that since I am sure I have voided the warranty (if it still exists) on all my Atari stuff anyway.

The reason I am asking is I would like to add memory to my TT030, and I need to see what is inside. I would like to add memory because I am setting up my TT030 with Debian Linux to run a multi-user telnettable BBS. It runs fine at the moment, but more that 8Megs would be great....."

Steve Sweet tells Chris:

"I don't think its that simple with the TT, in most cases you'll need a replacement memory board to get to a certain spec I believe.."

Harry Sideras adds:

"Undo the slotted screw first. It's captive, so it won't fall out. Take out the hard drive bay (lift at the front slightly and then pull

forward) and remove the ribbon connector from the hard drive (note the orientation so you put it back right when you've finished).

The ST RAM expansion area is immediately visible beneath the HD bay - I've never seen an installed board but AIUI it screws into the posts that are sticking up.

> The reason I am asking is I would like to add memory to my TT030,
> and I need to see what is inside. I would like to add memory
> because I am setting up my TT030 with Debian Linux to run a
> multi-user telnettable BBS. It runs fine at the moment, but more
> than 8Megs would be great...

For access to the TTRAM area, undo all the rest of the screws, prise the top off - the area at the back where all the ports are is the tricky bit. If you still have shielding it may be in several parts if it's like mine. There may be one for the fan and another for the PSU, which both need to be removed first by straightening the twists of metal. Finally, remove the main part of the shielding and you'll see the area for TTRAM in front of the PSU at the bottom left. There's one screw and then just a plug to the motherboard if you need to remove it, but depending on the board you already have you'll have banks for either 30-pin or 72pin SIMMs you can plug in.

Again, depending on the board you have, you'll have to flick dipswitches on the TTRAM board to make them recognizable by the TT.

That's basically enough for you to get going..."

John Garone asks about my all-time favorite terminal program:

"Anyone know the status of Missionware Software (Palatine, Ill.) regarding passing around their programs (in particular, FlashII Terminal Program)? Shareware, Freeware, etc.? Did they (do they) have a website?"

Our own Dana Jacobson tells John:

"I would say that John Trautschold, of Missionware, still considers Flash II a commercial program. You can reach John at JTRAUTSCHOLD@DELPHI.COM and ask.

No, John never had a site; he relied on the online services for support access."

Well folks, that's it for this week. Tune in again next week, same time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - Xbox To Launch With 11 Sega Titles!
  """""""""""""""""""""""""""""""   MDK2: Armageddon! Blast Lacrosse!

High Heat MLB 2002!
And more!

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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!
"""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""

Interplay Announces MDK2: Armageddon Ships

Mayhem, the action/adventure division of Interplay Entertainment Corp., along with BioWare Corp. announced that the highly anticipated game MDK2: Armageddon is now available at retail for the PlayStation2 computer entertainment system. MDK2: Armageddon expands upon the legacy of action, invention, and humor established by its PlayStation game console predecessor, MDK. Designed to unleash the power of the PlayStation 2, MDK2: Armageddon features exclusive level design enhancements, as well as customizable difficulty settings and multiple control schemes. The result is a surreal and cinematic romp through vast 3D environments, challenging levels, as well as a hilarious and engaging storyline. Promising superlative graphic detail, stunning visuals, dramatic and often humorous gameplay, MDK2: Armageddon is a sure purchase for PlayStation 2 owners.

Kurt and his high-tech coil suit return when he is called upon to defend the Earth from yet another alien onslaught. Once again teamed with the mad genius of Dr. Hawkins and heavily armed fury of Max, the 6-legged robotic dog, these three defenders of justice must use their unique abilities to out-sneak, out-blast, and out-think their bizarre enemies from another dimension.

Interplay Entertainment Corp. is currently developing a number of exciting new PlayStation 2 products including titles such as RLH, Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance, Giants and others. For information on Interplay Entertainment Corp. or Digital Mayhem, please visit their website at www.interplay.com. For information regarding BioWare Corp. please visit www.bioware.com.

3DO Ships Army Men Air Attack 2 for the PlayStation2

The 3DO Company announced that it has begun shipping the Army Men Air Attack 2 game for the PlayStation2 computer entertainment system to retailers throughout North America. This fast, furious game of helicopter combat offers fly by the seat of your pants, trigger-twitching action, combined with strategic environment interaction.

The heroic Captain Blade and his Alpha Wolf Squadron take on an onslaught of new missions improved helicopter physics and more game play than ever before. With twenty missions fought over ten unique environments, including a Japanese Garden, a cemetery on Halloween Night, the Old West, and even your own backyard, each battlefield is a visual playground. Cinematic

quality between mission FMV's seamlessly blends storyline and mission objectives as you fight the nefarious General Plastro and the villainous Baron Von Beige.

''The PS2 version of Army Men Air Attack 2 is looking phenomenal," says Miguel Lopez of gamespot.com. ''Never before has the Army Men series enjoyed such a level of visual perfection. Every moving element in the game is silky smooth, and the environments have never looked so vibrant."

The Army Men Air Attack 2 game offers five multi-player modes including four head-to-head modes, and six specially designed, multi-player environments, as well as twenty cooperative campaign missions, offering hours of fun. Awesome pyrotechnic-based weapons, including bottle rockets, roman candles and cherry bombs, allow players to scorch the enemy with never-before-seen next generation special effects. Players must also cope with real-world forces, such as wind, gravity and fans that affect objects with unprecedented realism.

3DO Releases High Heat Major League Baseball 2002 For the PlayStation 2

Award-Winning Baseball Game Greets Next Generation Console Just in Time For Spring Training

The 3DO Company announced that it has begun shipping the PlayStation 2 version of the High Heat Major League Baseball 2002 game to retail outlets throughout North America and online stores. Following in the award-winning tradition of its PC counterpart, the High Heat game has already been named ''Top PlayStation 2 baseball game" by several key gaming publications including Official PlayStation Magazine, PSE2 Magazine, and Daily Radar. Said Daily Radar, ''The PS2 version of High Heat 2002 is, without competition, the best next-gen ballgame around."

This year's edition of the High Heat Major League Baseball 2002 game features all new graphics and is endorsed by Montreal Expos superstar outfielder Vladimir Guerrero and his brother, infielder Wilton Guerrero of the Cincinnati Reds, who have used the game to scout pitchers even before they became endorsers of the product.

The features of ''High Heat Major League Baseball 2002" for the PlayStation 2 include:

- -- Extremely realistic ballparks: The game includes high-detail models, realistic texturing, real-time shadows, interactive crowds/Intelligent Crowd Excitement (I.C.E.), and vertex lighting.
- -- Detailed baseball players: "High Heat" features precise models, detailed uniforms, perfect player faces, signature animations, and projective texture shadows.
- -- Stunning in-game graphics and menus: With TV-style flash and dazzle, the in-game graphics and menus have an exciting, next-generation look and feel.
- -- New on-field coaches and managers: Base coaches tell runners to stop, slide or wave them on through to the next base. Managers visit the mound to check the pitcher's status, help settle the pitcher down and/or stall for time as relievers are warmed up in the bullpens.
- -- Jumbo-tron instant replays: Watching every replay on the jumbotron in the game adds to the feel of immersion into the real-life experience.

-- Working ballpark clocks: One more little detail hammers home the game’s realism.
-- Extensive tuning menu: This feature allows advanced players almost unlimited possibilities for customization.

Awards received by the "High Heat" brand include:
-- Top 10 Games of All Time - Computer Gaming World
-- "This year’s best baseball video game" - Sport Illustrated 12/18/00
-- "The finest baseball game on any system, ever" - PC Gamer
-- "Sports Game of the Year" - Computer Gaming World
-- Winner-Best PC Sports Game of 2000 - Gamepen, UGP.com

The High Heat Major League Baseball 2002 game, produced under license by Major League Baseball Properties, is available on five different gaming consoles this season. The game is available now for PlayStation 2, the PlayStation game console, and personal computer. In May, the High Heat game will ship for the Nintendo Game Boy Color and a Game Boy Advance version will be in stores on June 11 for the launch of the new system.

Acclaim Sports Announces Blast Lacrosse for PlayStation Game Console

Acclaim Sports announced that Blast Lacrosse, the first ever lacrosse title in video game history, is in development and will be released this Spring on the PlayStation game console.

Continuing the tradition of arcade-style sports games made popular for home console systems with the NBA JAM franchise, Blast Lacrosse will feature hard-hitting action with over-the-top, fast-paced game play.

‘‘With our Blast Lacrosse title, Acclaim Sports continues to lead the video game industry by introducing ground breaking sports titles. For the first time, gamers will get to experience the intense, in-your-face excitement of indoor lacrosse," said Steve Felsen, Director of Brand Management.

Blast Lacrosse will be officially licensed by the National Lacrosse League, the premier professional indoor lacrosse league, currently in its fourth season. The title will feature National Lacrosse League teams and players.

‘‘We are pleased to partner with Acclaim to bring the excitement of the National Lacrosse League to consumers for the first time in video game history, " said Jim Jennings, the Commissioner of the National Lacrosse League.

Blast Lacrosse will be a 5-on-5 arcade-style game with all the exciting stick-checks, open field collisions, and frantic, high-scoring action of professional indoor lacrosse. A Pick-Up-and-Play control system with ‘‘Turbo" and ‘‘On Fire" modes allows players to check harder, run faster, shoot quicker and to perform incredible special moves. Real player attributes reflect each player’s speed, shot power, passing skill, shot accuracy and overall strength. Full game statistics highlight goals, assists, shots on goal, save percentage, body checks and time of possession.

Xbox to Launch with 11 Sega Titles, Says Gates

Microsoft Corp has put more firepower in the arsenal of its new Xbox videogame console with 11 game titles to be made by Japanese software developer Sega Corp for its autumn launch, chairman Bill Gates said on Friday.

‘‘People didn’t know how committed we were for the Japanese market," Gates told Reuters. ‘‘We’ve got the Japanese market full-speed ahead on the Xbox."

The deal could be a huge boost to Sega’s new focus on game development.

It will also give the Xbox a much-needed array of 15 to 20 game titles when it hits shelves this autumn in Japan and the United States, a launch target that Gates said was on schedule.

That will help determine whether Xbox, which Microsoft hopes will prove a growth opportunity in the interactive entertainment business, will be a match for established competitors such as Sony Corp’s reigning console -- PlayStation 2.

‘‘This is a business where there’s no way to get in small. You have to be totally committed," Gates said in an interview.

That’s important in Japan, where close coordination between hardware and software makers is credited with putting its videogame makers at the forefront of the $20 billion industry.

Software titles are crucial to the success of game consoles because they generate sales and also offer higher margins for both the hardware manufacturer and game developer.

The cubic Xbox with its bright green ‘‘X" logo, built-in online capability and hard drive, is shouldering Microsoft’s hope of breaking into interactive home entertainment.

Microsoft said it will spend more than $500 million in the first 18 months after the Xbox’s launch on marketing.

‘‘Even for us that’s a huge, huge investment," Gates said.

Microsoft Corp also opened an avenue for online gaming with the Xbox console by allying with Japanese Internet services company NTT Communications Corp a day earlier.

Net access for the Xbox is a key feature that the world’s top software company hopes will give its new game machine an edge against Sony Corp’s popular PlayStation 2 machine, which has yet to announce a strategy for connecting to the Internet.

Sony has a firm grip on the market with its PlayStation series, with the first version becoming the most successful video game machine ever and the second version gaining a wide head start with its launch nearly a year ago.

Together, they represent a combined user base that is approaching the 100 million mark.

The new Sega titles for Xbox would include racing games such as ‘‘Sega GT 2" and adventure titles such as ‘‘Panzer Dragoon."

Sega has said it plans to supply games to Sony as well as to Nintendo Co Ltd., which will launch a next-generation console this year to go head-to-head with the Xbox and PlayStation 2.

But in an arena marked by fierce competition -- witness Sega's vanished hardware platform -- others reminded Microsoft that taking the trophy was not going to be easy.

''I'm not worried. Good luck," said Ken Kutaragi, president of Sony Computer Entertainment. Speaking a day earlier, he had stressed the difficulty of breaking into Japan, which he called "the center of gravity."

''It's good for Microsoft in that they've got a strong developer locked in for some titles," said Lisa Spicer, senior analyst at ING Barings. ''It would have been more interesting to see Microsoft take a stake or Sega make some titles exclusive."

Takashi Oya, senior analyst at Deutsche Securities Ltd, said the announcements did not change his view that the Xbox will have little chance of success given its late entry, "unless Nintendo delays the launch of its new GameCube video game machine."

Even Kutaragi was looking forward to the fight, saying Microsoft's entry should help the game market expand more broadly.

''It's good for the industry," he said.

But Gates, an icon of the digital age, saw it differently.

''I haven't seen such excitement about these products as I did about the original PC or as I did about the original Windows operating system," he said.

Hot Products Wins License to Develop "Standard" Pack-in Controller for NUON

Hot Products Inc. and VM Labs Inc., of Mountain View, Calif. Monday announced that the companies have collaborated on the development of a NUON pack-in game controller that they hope will become a standard component included in all NUON enhanced DVD players produced.

Elite-Lite is the low cost version of the standard full-featured controller named the Pro-Elite. HPI is optimistic that acceptance of this program by DVD manufacturers could realize sales for over 2.5 million units over the next 12 months.

Designed as a value-priced game controller, this product will draw immediate attention to the fantastic game playing and entertainment capabilities of the NUON enhanced DVD player. ''In a recent survey, over 83 percent of those questioned stated that they have plans to purchase games for their NUON player," stated Don Thomas, director, Peripherals Licensing and Promotion for VM Labs.

''These statistics reinforce our objective to encourage all OEMs to include the Elite-Lite as a value-added item with their NUON enhanced DVD players."

The Elite-Lite will also be available as a retail product with an estimated SRP of $17.99.

The Elite-Lite represents NUON's entry level gaming peripheral. It will augment VM Labs Pro-Elite, a Digital+Analog controller complete with memory card capability. The Pro-Elite is VM Labs' Reference-Design NUON Controller, which is also being produced and marketed worldwide by Hot Products Inc.

Red Jade, Ericsson-Backed 'Game Boy Killer,' Dies a Quiet Death

Inside the video-game industry, Red Jade was a legend even though it didn't yet exist. The under-construction wireless entertainment device, said the whispers, had the potential to steal the handheld gaming market from Nintendo's Game Boy.

Developed by Red Jade Inc., a Palo Alto, Calif.-based start-up backed primarily by Swedish cell-phone maker Ericsson, the device reportedly integrated video game, music and personal digital assistant (PDA) functions, as well as wireless Bluetooth compatibility.

Last month, however, it was game over for the so-called Game Boy killer: the year-old company abandoned the project and laid off nearly all of its 50 or so workers, according to representatives at Ericsson and a former Red Jade employee.

Official details about the Red Jade device were sketchy; nondisclosure agreements prevented employees and prospective game developers from discussing it, and the company was notoriously tight-lipped with reporters, even when things seemed to be going well. But the trail of corporate press releases, information leaks and key management hires from the game industry fomented speculation that Nintendo would soon have a serious competitor in the portable gaming market.

The history of portable gaming is littered with the broken electronic cases of unsuccessful attempts, such as the Sega GameGear and the Atari Lynx, to knock Nintendo from its perch. This year, Nintendo is expected to continue its domination with the Game Boy Advance, which is set for a June 11 release in the U.S. (Sony and Microsoft have not announced handheld versions of their next-generation consoles, the PlayStation 2 and Xbox.)

Nintendo currently controls more than 95 percent of the handheld market and has sold more than 110 million Game Boys since its introduction 12 years ago. In 2000, four of the top 10 best-selling games in the U.S. -- across all platforms, including Sega's Dreamcast and Sony's PlayStation 2 -- were for the Game Boy or Game Boy Color.

The Red Jade device, had it worked out, seemed poised to tackle Nintendo with such high-end features as an MP3 player and a PDA, in addition to comparable -- even superior, according to some reports -- game play.

"It's possible that a multi-functional device that was priced cheaply enough and had similar power dedicated to gaming could compete with the Game Boy with a convergent strategy," said Billy Pidgeon, an analyst with Jupiter Media Metrix.

Ericsson apparently agreed when it invested $7 million in Red Jade last

September through a subsidiary. "One of Ericsson's goals is to expand our global community to include a younger audience," said Gunnar Tyrsing, vice president of Ericsson Business Innovation, in a statement at the time. Red Jade secured another $3 million from IT Provider, a Swedish venture capital firm.

Red Jade was conceived in 1999 by company co-founder Fredrik Liliegren, a veteran game developer for the PlayStation and PC platforms. Liliegren's background and subsequent statements set the rumor mill in motion, particularly after the firm was funded and the co-founder was officially appointed president and chief content officer last October. "Cultivating strong partnerships with influential video-game developers and publishers and initiating a global adoption effort will be significant to our success," he said in a press release. "We plan to find partners that share our vision that the next stage for video games will be wireless."

Red Jade fanned the flames a month later when it hired Michael Staskin, a former vice president of sales and marketing for Sega GameWorks, and R. J. Mical, co-inventor of the Atari Lynx handheld gaming system and a key figure in the development of the ill-fated 3DO TV-based console.

"They were riding under the radar. But they seemed to have the technology and the cost issues down," said Craig Harris, editor in chief of IGNpocket, a Web site devoted to handheld gaming. "Developers thought it had the potential to be a Game Boy killer."

In addition to funding the device's development, Ericsson had pledged to support Red Jade with marketing, manufacturing and distribution. In late October, Red Jade approached West Coast advertising agencies about an account in the neighborhood of $75 million for a possible 2001 consumer ad campaign, according to Adweek.

But with February's layoffs and suspension of operations, it appears that the dream of the Red Jade is over. "It was a joint decision to cancel the project by the board of the (Red Jade) company," said Henrik Scharp, vice president of strategy and market communication for Ericsson Business Innovation. "It didn't meet the milestones set." A spokeswoman for Ericsson said that Red Jade still exists as a company and is currently re-evaluating its business plan.

With sales for its cellular products softening, it's unlikely that Ericsson will pony up more capital to develop a Game Boy-like product. Scharp declined to comment on Ericsson's interest in the portable game platforms.

"It's a shame that Red Jade is never going to surface," Harris said. "But it's really hard to go up against someone like Nintendo when they pretty much own the handheld gaming market."

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A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

PC Price War Seen Getting More Cut-Throat in 2001

The personal computer price war may get as bloody as a scene from ‘‘Gladiator" this year, with PC makers slashing and hacking prices in order to survive, analysts and executives said on Monday.

‘‘Personal computer makers are preparing for an intense battle for market share in 2001, as some PC vendors reduce profit margin gains to increase market penetration," market research firm Gartner Dataquest said.

Dell Computer Corp. and Gateway Inc., which both sell direct to customers instead of in retail stores, are expected to get even more aggressive than they already have been in the U.S. market, said Dataquest analyst Martin Reynolds.

Dell, the No. 2 PC maker, is believed to be leading prices down. In times of declining component prices, Dell can afford to cut prices more than its rivals which may have bought the components earlier at higher cost.

‘‘You look at our cost of selling vs. someone else’s cost of selling -- there’s a lot of room there for prices that allow us to be really profitable for us as a company," said Dell Senior Vice President and General Manager Joseph Marengi.

‘‘And components declines have been good over the past couple of quarters, and they still are going in the same direction as we speak," he added. ‘‘So what you wind up with, it’s Dell’s natural thing to pass that onto the customer."

Dell also has been passing onto the customer freebies such as printers, speakers, Internet access and delivery. While it used to be normal to wait several weeks for a new computer from Dell, they are now known to arrive on doorsteps within days.

While Dell has been gaining on market leader Compaq Computer Corp., it has done so at the price of its own profits, with margins of 18 percent in the fourth quarter, down from more than 20 percent the year before.

Executives said in February that 18 percent margins would continue as long as the economic environment stays the same.

Compaq Chief Executive Michael Capellas said earlier this month he expected gross margins to continue to deteriorate, but would not specify how much.

Reynolds predicted that both Dell and Gateway would cut back their own margins to take market share from Compaq, as well as Hewlett-Packard Co. and International Business Machines Corp.

‘‘Dell and Gateway will cut their own margins to grow their market share, and to put pressure onto their competition," said Reynolds. ‘‘We are going to see companies faced with some tough decisions.

‘‘The price erosion will make other regions of the world buy more PCs, so the global vendors might also choose to shift their share from the United States to maintain profitability," he added.

PC makers that sell through stores or other distributors have been heavily discounting to move their computers out of warehouses after an inventory glut due to slack holiday sales.

There were some signs from Taiwanese suppliers of the microprocessors used in PCs, such as Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co., that PC inventories were getting cleared out.

But Merrill Lynch analyst Steven Fortuna said it was too early to draw any conclusions.

‘‘All our checks suggest that PC demand remains weak, especially in the U.S.," he said.

The big concern is whether sales in Europe or Asia begin to show the same weakness as in the United States. Dell’s Marengi said it depended on the industry, that the pharmaceuticals or oil and gas industries were ‘‘going great guns."

Geographically, he said that at multinational companies there was ‘‘concern across the board" that is effecting computer purchasing.

‘‘The PC industry suffered a nasty surprise in fourth quarter 2000 on account of the dramatic turn in the U.S. economy," said Dataquest analyst George Shiffler. ‘‘We’re concerned that circumstances in the United States still appear to be deteriorating and that the U.S. slowdown looks to be spreading to the rest of the world."

Reynolds said that PC margins, including the expense of distributing computers, are currently at about 15 percent industrywide. He expects margins this year to be pushed downwards into a range of between 10 percent and 12 percent.

‘‘The reason we see it coming is because the market growth is going flat, and if you want growth now, a company has got to take it from a competitor," he said.

He added that the average price for a PC is now $1,000, and that would be discounted by another $50 to $100 on average.

Worldwide PC shipments, excluding PC server computers, are expected to total 144.5 million units in 2001, up 10.7 percent over 2000, Dataquest said.

If concerns about recessions in the United States and the world economies were to be realized, Gartner Dataquest analysts said, PC shipment growth could fall into the single digits for 2001. The Dataquest analysts said they do not see market conditions improving until 2002, and even then, the industry faces some significant challenges from market saturation.

Napster Crawls Through The Loopholes

It appears that Judge Patel’s order has not only had little effect on Napster’s operations, but may have created a monster.

Is Napster in contempt of court? If so, the Judge might have herself to blame.

More than two weeks have passed since U.S. District Judge Marilyn Hall Patel issued her modified ruling on the injunction in the RIAA v. Napster

lawsuit. Patel’s re-write came as a bit of a surprise to some, considering it’s leniency. After all, many who have followed this case since its inception expected Patel to simply shut Napster down for the duration of the trial.

Instead, Judge Patel gave Napster another life. Her order allows Napster to continue operation if they remove from their peer-to-peer exchange all songs on a list compiled by the plaintiff recording companies. Sound’s simple enough, right?

Enter Aimster, Pig Latin, alternate spellings and a handful of other encoders and schemes, and it appears that Judge Patel’s order has not only had little effect on Napster’s operations, but may have created a monster.

Judge Patel allowed Napster 72 hours from the time these lists were delivered to rid their service of these copyrighted songs. That deadline has long passed and it seems harder to find a song that Napster is filtering, than one that they are not.

On the surface, that makes sense if you consider the vast number of copyrights these five labels control. But what about the mainstream material? What about the songs you would expect to be the first blocked?

Well, let’s pick a few songs at random. Nothing tricky, just the hits.

Metallica has certainly been right in the thick of this mess. A random search (no song specified) for "Metallica" yields 100 starting results. Among these results, most of Metallica’s biggest hits including "Enter Sandmann," (note spelling) "Nothing Else Matters" and a variety of other hits and older material including "Kill ’Em All."

Dr. Dre didn’t want his songs available on Napster without permission. A search for "Dr. Dre" is just as fruitful. 100 results on the first page, including hits "Nothin’ but a G thing," "Still Dre," and "Keep their Heads Ringin’, " some of the rapper’s biggest hits.

How about some random hit songs, the kind one would expect to be the first filtered?

Beatles: "Hey Jude" .... check.

Madonna: "Evita" ... check.

Backstreet Boyz "I Want it That Way" .... check.

The Dave Mathews Band: "Satellite" .... check.

Cicso: "The Thong Song" ... check.

Lenny Kravitz: "Fly Away" ... check.

Rolling Stones: "Start me up".... check.

Surprisingly, an alternate spelling was not needed to locate these files. Some were misspelled (perhaps mistakenly), but came up in the search anyway.

You get the picture. It’s a stretch to think that the labels involved forgot to include these songs on their list. Beyond that, if Napster were acting in good faith and legitimately wanted to avoid infringements,

wouldn’t they consider filtering some of these recognizable hit songs on their own?

One possible snag may have come with the lists the labels submitted to Napster. Napster CEO, Hank Barry claims that Sony Recordings submitted improperly compiled lists using artist names instead of the "file names" specified by Judge Patel. Napster clearly prefers to block songs over artists, as this allows for the "unlisted" songs to remain available.

If Barry’s claims are accurate, Sony just further clouded a chaotic situation. It’s apparent that this injunction is not doing what it was meant to do.

Nearly every major copyrighted song title is still available and that raises the question: is Napster in contempt of court?

Napster claims to be doing everything "within the limitations of their system" to keep these specified songs off of their servers. They’ve used their own resources and have developed partnerships with third party technologies to assist them in ridding their servers of these infringing songs. Napster claims that filtering such a widely used system is a daunting task, and that they are doing everything in their power to comply with the injunction.

On the other hand, an argument could be made that Napster is, essence, playing dumb. Judge Patel called for Napster to police its system for "reasonable" variations of song and file names. Adding an "n" to the end of "Sandman" would certainly seem to be a reasonable variation, one that even the simplest of filtering software would seem to detect. No one at Napster thought to look for this song on their system? What about the scores of other high-profile, copyrighted songs available for the taking? Certainly some of these songs must have been on the list, now half a million songs long.

Is Napster doing their best to comply with this injunction, or is Napster doing the least they can in order to retain the user-base and traffic they’ve built? We all know by now that Napster plans to come out of this operating as a business. Could they be reluctant to implement filtering for fear of alienating the loyal user before they have a chance to offer that user a fee-based service? If so, Napster is dangerously close to what some might consider contempt of court, a direct refusal to observe a court order.

At least one party is sure Napster is in contempt. The RIAA has announced that they will approach Judge Patel this week with a filing detailing their stance that Napster has not complied with the injunction. "At this point it is clear that Napster hasn’t complied with the court’s order," said RIAA Spokesman Jano Cabrera.

Oddly enough, the person to blame for this might not be Napster or the "Big Five." The person to blame for this mess might be Judge Patel. When given the chance to institute a definitive resolution, she simply muddled the case further by allowing for subjective interpretations of things like "reasonable variations." The last thing this case needed was more confusion.

Still, she has a "no-nonsense" reputation. This was evident by the speed and severity of her original injunction, handed down back on July 26th of last year. While the re-written injunction was decidedly more liberal, it is safe to assume that Judge Patel expected her injunction to be followed

out with full consideration of the intent for which it was written. In other words, it’s unlikely that Patel is going to buy the "we didn’t know what you meant" argument at this juncture.

This case is approaching one year in pre-trial activities alone. Meanwhile, segments of artists and labels are angry because they feel as if their copyrights are being abused and conversely, Napster supporters are growing tired of the modifications to their service and looming shut-down. If Judge Patel didn’t want copyrighted songs being traded at Napster, she should have given an ultimatum: while we figure this out, get said files off the system completely or you’ll be shut down. Otherwise, she should have simply left Napster alone to operate as is.

The Judge will be in a tough spot this week. Her injunction has been a colossal failure and the RIAA will point this fact out to the world. The Judge’s lack of resolution and conviction in her ruling created loopholes for Napster to crawl through, and of course they did. Now she’ll have to decide what to do about it.

Napster And RIAA Square Off In Court, Again

In papers filed in U.S. District Court, the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) is accusing music sharing service Napster of non-compliance with Judge Marilyn Hall Patel’s recent order to implement a filtering system. Judge Patel ordered Napster to employ a filtering system that would prevent users from downloading copyrighted songs from commercial artists. Calling Napster’s filtering system "archaic," the RIAA suggested that the popular music sharing service implement a "filter-in" system instead.

RIAA president Hilary Rosen issued a strong condemnation to Napster in a recent release. "Calling this type of filter effective is like calling an umbrella full of holes a hurricane shelter. It’s not working, it never will work and Napster should be ordered to implement an effective filter or to change its filtering method."

The RIAA said that it’s way too easy for Napster users to work around the restrictions that are now in place for users to share copyrighted works that should be blocked. RIAA explained that Napster’s search engine is "clearly not blocking reasonable variations" in artist and title names. Shorten the title of the song, for example, and Napster’s search engine can find it.

The RIAA would like to see Napster utilize digital checksums -- something that’s already part of Napster’s operating system, they say -- to identify identical MP3 files, regardless of the name given by the user. By examining the actual digital contents of the audio file, RIAA said that Napster could weed out potential scofflaws. The RIAA also suggested that Napster could incorporate a "digital fingerprinting" scheme -- a method by which MP3 files would be analyzed for unique digital characteristics.

Finally, Napster could incorporate a "filter-in" system, said the RIAA. Under this model, Napster would index and allow distribution of only those musical works for which it was authorized. "the ’filter in’ model is, in fact, how every other distributor of music or any copyrighted work must operate their business," said the RIAA.

For his part, Napster CEO Hank Barry isn't taking the RIAA's accusations lying down. He said his company is "aggressively complying" with the court's injunction, and has blocked access to more than a quarter million songs in the past three weeks. Barry said that Napster's relationship with CDDB operator Gracenote is playing off, as well, with additional blockage of 10,000 artist names and 40,000 song title variants.

It's had a measurable impact on Napster's traffic, said Barry -- Napster's index has been reduced by more than half, and the average number of shared files per user has dropped by almost two thirds. Almost a third of Napster's staff are working full-time on copyright compliance.

Barry scoffed at the RIAA's calls to change Napster's filtering technology. "It is an attempt to change the subject rather than cooperate with Napster as the injunction specifies," said Barry. "Napster will work with any technology that fits within the parameters of the court's order."

Barry also said that the RIAA and record companies are partly to blame for problems preventing copyrighted songs from being properly blocked -- a violation of Judge Patel's injunction, according to Barry.

"Because of the recording industry's continuing failure to comply with the requirements of the injunction and the massive volume of data they have sent where the artist and song title they provide actually conflicts with the file name, Napster has been forced to spend considerable resources attempting to identify valid notices," said Barry. "The RIAA's report fails to mention their complete lack of cooperation in supplying variations in artist names and song titles. While we have gone forward to block this multitude of files, it is important to note that not a single record company has provided us with one variant of any song name. This is contrary to both the Ninth Circuit's decision and the District Court's order."

Adobe Debuts 3-D Web Tool

In the near future, boring flat Web sites will be moving into another dimension.

Publishing software maker Adobe Systems Inc. on Monday announced that Adobe Atmosphere -- a tool that will enable the creation and interactive use of three-dimensional Web sites -- is slated for release in late summer.

''Today, browsing a site means clicking on document links and doing simple searches. In the near future, browsing a site will mean walking through 3-D room spaces, speaking with other visitors or site representatives, and seeing animated objects in real time and in a more life-like setting," said Bruce Damer, president and chief executive of DigitalSpace Corp.

The Atmosphere product promises to transform the Web experience for online shoppers, students, entertainment seekers and others, Adobe said in a release.

The Atmosphere authoring tool will help developers create a 3-D environment into which they can import images built on 3-D modeling tools like Viewpoint, Curious Labs and Discreet 3DStudio Max, Adobe Senior Product Manager for Atmosphere Asako Yoshimura told Reuters.

Such an environment could be a Web site of an automobile showroom floor

with walls and pillars and staircases, Yoshimura said.

The developers would then use other tools to import a 3-D version of a car and a sales representative who will answer questions posed by users, she said. Music and streaming video files also could be imported and incorporated into the site.

San Jose, Calif.-based Adobe will be distributing its Atmosphere reader at no charge so users can open and interact with the 3-D sites, she said.

The collaboration is the first product to emerge from Adobe’s investment in Viewpoint Corp. last year.

Adobe is making a test version of the software available in the products section of its company Web site at www.adobe.com.

’Lion’ Worm Roars at Linux Servers

Several security experts disclosed the existence last Friday of the aptly named "Lion" worm, which preys upon Linux servers and may have the capacity to infect other Unix-based servers as well.

According to the Global Incident Tracking Center of the SANS Institute (SANS), the virus has already infected four companies and one university. Though believed to be an offshoot of January’s so-called "Ramen" worm, the Lion worm threatens to cause infinitely more havoc on the systems it invades.

"It turns your system into Swiss cheese," Greg Shipley, director of security for Chicago-based information security consulting firm Neohapsis, told news sources. "None of the stuff that the worm does is new. I’ve just never seen it packaged all together."

Added Shipley: "I’ve seen all the components, but I’ve never seen anything that kicks in your door, eats all your food and steals all of your jewelry ...."

By exploiting a vulnerability evident since at least the Ramen days, the Lion worm uses infected servers to search for TCP port-53 connections. The port-53 connections indicate that the device on the network is in fact a computer and not a fax machine, printer or other peripheral.

Once a computer is infected, Lion searches for user names and passwords for every account on the system and e-mails this data, along with the computer’s system configuration information, to an unknown address in the China.com domain.

After accomplishing the cyber equivalent of grand larceny, Lion then installs several hackers’ tools, often rewriting existing files to create them, then uses these applications to penetrate other vulnerable servers.

Even more distressing is the fact that the worm hides these so-called Trojan Horses by installing a root kit that give the virus back-door entry and, therefore, unrestricted access to everything in the computer. The virus then covers its tracks in the systems log.

These back-door entries allow subsequent hackers to delete or install

software, gain proprietary information, alter trust relationships -- really "anything," according to SANS director of information security John Green.

"It’s the meanest piece of code I’ve seen," said SANS director of research Alan Paller. "It [does] what hackers do manually when they break into a system. You don’t need to do anything for it to spread, making it much more dangerous."

"We think it’s going to cause people, unless they are brilliant, to nuke the machine, erase everything on the disk, and reinstall the entire operating system in the hope [that their] back-up files work," added SANS director Paller. "We don’t believe it can be cleaned out."

However, both Paller and Neohapsis’s Shipley noted the worm would not be near the threat that it is if systems administrators would only update their systems. The vulnerability that the Lion worm is presently exploiting has been public knowledge since the end of January, not long after the Ramen worm made headlines.

"When the dust settles from this, I’m going to use this as a point to convince chief information officers (CIOs) that everyone is a target," Shipley said. The Lion virus "is scanning random networks. It doesn’t care if it’s a dot-com, dot-net or dot-mil."

There is no word yet about where this virus is believed to have originated or who may have created it. The Ramen worm was created by so-called "script-kiddies."

First Windows-Linux Combination Virus Surfaces

An Ohio-based antivirus company announced late Tuesday the existence of a new virus capable of infecting both Windows and Linux operating systems.

"We didn’t think this was possible," Keith Peer, CEO of antivirus software maker Central Command, told news sources. "It’s a real step forward for virus writers."

According to Central Command, the so-called "W32.Winux" virus is dangerous but does not carry a highly destructive payload. It can only infect servers using an Intel Pentium processor and cannot spread to Sun Microsystems UNIX servers or to Apple Macintosh servers running the Linux OS.

On hearing Peer’s comments, SecurityFocus.com incident analyst Ryan Russell told NewsFactor Network that while the newly released virus is "a really interesting exercise," it is important not to blow its importance out of proportion.

Russell also told NewsFactor that the W32.Winux is not the first cross-platform virus, though he does agree that it is the first Windows/Linux combination virus.

"The Morris worm did a couple of different flavors of UNIX, if you consider those different platforms, [and] there are Word macro viruses that can do Mac and Windows," Russell said.

Said Russell: "We've all known this was possible. However, I think most of us were expecting a Linux/Windows combination worm before a virus."

Todd Miller, a network security and management analyst for The Yankee Group, told NewsFactor that while it is important to be aware of the virus, it is "not really all that earth-shattering."

Command Central product manager Steven Sundermeier told news sources that W32.Winux "is believed to have originated out of the Czech Republic" by the hacker group known as "29A."

In late 1999, the group authored a virus that posed as a cure for the so-called Millennium Bug, and last September it claimed responsibility for the "Stream" virus that experts said was especially adept at hiding itself from antivirus software.

Company officials told news sources that they first received the W32.Winux virus Tuesday afternoon via an anonymous e-mail believed to have been originated in the Czech Republic. Code from the virus reads: "[Win32/Linux, Winux] multi-platform virus by Benny/29A."

SecurityFocus.com's Russell, however, was skeptical about Central Command's depiction.

"The guy intentionally mailed [the virus] to them," Russell told NewsFactor. "[Benny is] trying to be a responsible virus writer. He mails a copy to the AV vendors."

"If you're going to be a virus writer, that's the 'right' way to do it," Russell added.

As to the seemingly uncorroborated contention that the e-mail was believed to have originated in the Czech Republic, Russell pointed NewsFactor to several Web sites, including one that offers the virus for download and another posting a 1999 interview with Benny, who described himself as being a teenager from the Czech Republic and a member of 29A.

Thus far the W32.Winux virus is not believed to have affected any servers, and analysts seem to concur that the virus is not destructive.

"It's turned from a '10' virus to a '1' virus," Yankee's Miller told NewsFactor, cautioning that "any virus company will be interested whether it's destructive or not" because the virus will still waste "a lot of time, bandwidth, and certainly money."

Added SecurityFocus.com's Russell: "[W32.Winux's] importance is as a building block for others. This thing is just a spreader, not a payload. Other folks can add a payload."

Forrester Research analyst Frank Prince told NewsFactor: "Only in the case of a virus targeted at a specific organization for a specific purpose might this mechanism make delivery of the payload more effective and efficient. But in that already high-stakes arena, multi-stage attacks are not new."

Landmark Anti-Spam Bill Closer to Passage

On Wednesday, lawmakers in the U.S. House Energy and Commerce Committee overwhelmingly approved landmark legislation sponsored by Rep. Heather Wilson (R-New Mexico). The bill would allow consumers to refuse unwanted e-mail, and would give Internet service providers (ISPs) the right to sue to block unsolicited e-mail from their networks.

The bill bars some 718 companies from sending junk e-mail unless that e-mail is identified as an unsolicited commercial advertisement and includes a return e-mail address so recipients can opt out of receiving future e-mails.

The legislation is a tweaked version of a bill that passed a U.S. House subcommittee last week. Lawmakers approved new language that would, among other things, clear up how the bill would affect businesses with multiple subsidiaries. The new language also ensures that legal actions brought by state attorneys general "are aimed at benefiting consumers directly."

Because Wilson’s proposal imposes some criminal penalties, it is likely that it will now head to the House Judiciary Committee, Wilson spokesman Kevin McDermott told NewsFactor Network.

"They have a joint jurisdiction here," McDermott said. "We don’t know if they’re going to hold a mark-up [session] or just discharge the bill."

The bill could come before the full House sometime in the next few months.

Wilson’s legislation, co-sponsored by U.S. Representative Gene Green (D-Texas), imposes sweeping penalties on those who run afoul of the law, including making it a misdemeanor offense for intentionally using fraudulent return addresses or routing information.

That fraudulent information could include fake domain names or e-mail headers, false date or time stamps, false originating addresses, or any other information that falsely identifies the initiator or router of an e-mail message.

The legislation further allows ISPs and consumers to sue to block junk e-mail, with ISPs receiving the power to impose a junk e-mail policy and to sue spammers for US$500 per message if they violate that policy.

The lawmakers’ proposal allows aggrieved consumers to appeal to the U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC), which could then take an enforcement action. The FTC would also be authorized to take companies to court to recover damages if a company fails to remove consumers from its mailing lists, the lawmakers said.

The bill is the end-product of almost two years of effort by Wilson, who introduced similar legislation last year that cleared the House, only to stall in the U.S. Senate.

McDermott told NewsFactor that Wilson’s office is now in talks with U.S. Representative William Goodlatte (R-Virginia), who has also introduced legislation that would make it a criminal offense to fraudulently use another person’s e-mail address to send unsolicited e-mail.

Violators could face penalties of up to $15,000 per violation or $10 per e-mail, whichever is greater, the lawmaker said. Violators also would be responsible for repayment of the monetary losses suffered by their victims.

"We have talked and worked with Representative Goodlatte before," McDermott said. "He has some different proposals, and we will talk to him about that and try to accommodate his interests."

The House approval comes just one day after similar legislation was introduced in the U.S. Senate. That bill, sponsored by Senators Conrad Burns (R-Montana) and Ron Wyden (D-Oregon), is nearly identical to Wilson's legislation.

The lawmakers' proposal would require a valid return e-mail address so that recipients could easily ask to be removed from mass e-mail lists. Once notified, marketers would be prohibited from sending any further messages to a consumer who has asked them to stop.

In a statement, Burns said the legislation would benefit rural Internet customers, who must often pay high prices for their Net connections.

"For many people, spam is ruining their online experience and their ability to use e-mail. It's high time Congress acts to protect consumers from overzealous marketers," Burns said.

In a separate statement, Wyden agreed. "Left unchecked, Spam could have a significant negative impact on how consumers use Internet services and e-commerce," Wyden said. "This legislation strikes at unscrupulous individuals who use e-mail to annoy and mislead."

The senators' proposal has also attracted the support of Senator Joseph Lieberman (D-Connecticut).

McDermott said he expects House lawmakers will also work with the Senate on the proposal.

"We've worked and talked with Burns' office before and we'll continue to work together," McDermott told NewsFactor.

Study: Web Sites Ignore Kids Privacy

Most Web sites geared for children don't follow federal requirements for privacy, independent researchers said Wednesday.

Almost half of the 162 sites checked don't have prominent links to their privacy policy, and one in 10 had no link at all on their home page - contrary to the 1998 regulations designed to protect kids the Web.

The Federal Trade Commission wrote the rules for children's Web sites based on the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act.

''One year after the passage of COPPA we found more sites skirting the COPPA requirements than following them carefully," said Joseph Turow, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg Public Policy Center, and the author of the study.

COPPA requires that Web sites obtain ''verifiable parental consent" before collecting, using or disclosing any personal information, such as a name or address, from children under 13. Consent can be verified through postal mail or a telephone call. It also requires a detailed and easy-to-find privacy policy.

With the help of the FTC, the Annenberg researchers identified sites that appeal to kids and have a high percentage of visitors under the age of 13. They included sites for video games, snacks, children’s characters and TV shows.

Common on other Web sites too, the researchers found the privacy policies were difficult to find, read and understand.

‘‘We found that most of the 90 privacy policies were so long and complex that it took the coders an average of 9.4 minutes to read each policy in search of its COPPA statements," the report said.

The researchers spent 14 minutes reading the Applejacks.com policy, and were still confused by some portions. But the Chevroncars.com policy took about 16 minutes to read but featured pictures of ‘‘Wally the Warning Squirrel" cautioning children that their personal information would be used.

Representatives for Kelloggs, which runs the Applejacks.com site, could not be reached for comment.

Seventeen sites did not post privacy links on their home page - despite FTC requirements - but did collect personal information.

Other sites that did have privacy links did not highlight them as required by law, the report said, and many other policies didn’t have all the required statements about how personal information is used or how parents could review or remove their children’s personal information from the site.

Some proprietors of kids Web sites have complained that the COPPA requirements are too strict, and burdensome for smaller sites.

Three months after COPPA went into effect last year, the FTC reviewed several sites to check for compliance. Out of all the sites that collected personal information, about half had ‘‘substantial compliance problems," according to the FTC.

The Annenberg study suggested that the FTC should help parents find out easily if a site conforms to COPPA through some sort of seal-of-approval program, and that sites have clearer privacy policies.

‘‘Even when information collection does require permission, as COPPA does," Turow said, ‘‘people still need to be able to make decisions based on privacy policies they can understand before their eyes glaze over."

Digital Rights Case To Be Heard By Supreme Court

The New York Times v. Tasini could shape the debate over copyright and written content in the electronic age.

A showdown before the U.S. Supreme Court on Wednesday could lay the ground rules for who owns the electronic rights to stories that have previously appeared in print newspapers and magazines.

Legal experts say the case, The New York Times v. Tasini, could shape the debate over copyright and written content in the electronic age in the same

way the Napster file-swapping lawsuit is molding the digital-music scene.

"It’s about e-rights in cyberspace," said Orrie Dinstein, an intellectual property lawyer at King & Spalding, who has discussed strategy in sessions with freelancer Jonathan Tasini, but was never retained as counsel. "If the Supreme Court affirms, it will send an important message about how courts are willing to apply copyright laws to digital material."

On one side are the freelance writers, who say they should get additional money if a publication repackages their work in forms such as CD-ROMs or Lexis-Nexis archives. On the other side are the publishers, who argue that they are simply distributing revisions of work they’ve already paid for--a practice that’s legal under copyright law.

A victory for the freelancers could mean millions in back pay for articles that have appeared on the Web or in other electronic forms. Publishers, meanwhile, argue they would have to strip their archives of freelance pieces, leaving holes in historical documents that would harm educators, researchers and the public at large.

The suit was first filed in 1993 by six freelancers who claimed that publications including The New York Times, Time magazine and several others didn’t have the rights to publish their articles in various electronic forms. A district court sided with the publishers, but an appeals court reversed that decision in September 1999 and ruled in favor of the freelancers.

The publishers then appealed to the Supreme Court, which agreed to take the case. It will hear oral arguments Wednesday and render a decision some time after that.

Both the publishers and the freelancers say their arguments will have sweeping consequences for electronic content of all types. Chuck Sims, a partner at Proskauer Rose who’s filed briefs on behalf of some publishers, said a freelancer victory would rob the public of some electronic archives, including many pieces in op-ed, travel, book review and food sections, which often rely heavily on freelance copy.

"Every newspaper in the country, and magazine as well, will immediately do whatever they can to pull off freelance articles," Sims said, adding that many already have taken down pieces while waiting for the case’s outcome. Worse, he said, historians searching for information won’t know that, say, a piece detailing a certain incident during the Gulf War has been pulled out of an archive. "If the publishers lose this case, one of the awful things is you won’t know what you’re not getting," he said.

But Tasini, one of the freelancers in the case, accused publishers of scare tactics. "There’s a simple solution: Pay the writers," he said. If the freelancers win, "tens of thousands of writers will have the ability to be compensated for being ripped off."

Still, Tasini said the case goes beyond his quest for some back pay. It comes down to content ownership in the digital age, when it’s easier and cheaper than ever before to distribute works in electronic form. If he wins, he said, the ruling "will essentially say that media companies do not own all information."

The case has attracted the attention of a wide variety of people. Librarians and the U.S. Copyright Office have filed briefs siding with freelancers. Historians including documentary filmmaker Ken Burns have

weighed in on behalf of publishers, fearing a freelance victory would interfere with research. Tasini calls writers who oppose him, such as Burns, "traitors."

Already, the case is having repercussions in the publishing world. Many publishers have rewritten freelance contracts in recent years, demanding the electronic rights to a piece in addition to print rights.

So far, courts mostly have sided with freelancers. Tasini won the most recent round at the appeals level. And just last week, a freelance photographer scored a victory against the National Geographic Society when a federal appeals court ruled that the company had to compensate him for magazine pictures that later turned up in a CD-ROM collection of older magazines.

In a move that could pose a challenge to publishers trying to defend electronic collections that include freelance works, the court ruled that National Geographic had created a new work because the package contained searching software and another program that showed a montage of photographs including works by the freelancer who was suing the company.

To quell fears about incomplete archives, the judges urged a lower court to consider ordering National Geographic to pay the photographer for his work rather than pull the images from the package, writing, "we urge the court to consider alternatives, such as mandatory license fees, in lieu of foreclosing the public’s computer-aided access to this educational and entertaining work."

Norman Davis, a partner at Miami-based Steel Hector & Davis who represented the freelancer in his fight against the National Geographic, predicted more cases like his and Tasini’s as courts grapple with new technology that blurs intellectual property lines.

"This is a different time than the creative community has ever known," Davis said. "Whether it’s the Internet, digital storage or DVD, there are packaging opportunities that never existed before. It’s this new packaging opportunity that raises questions that have never been asked before, and the courts--one by one--are trying to sort them out."

IBM Holocaust Lawsuit Dropped

The lead attorney for five plaintiffs who last month sued IBM for "knowingly suppl[ying] technology used to catalog death camp victims and aid[ing] in [their] persecution, suffering, and genocide" has agreed to drop the case.

Michael D. Hausfeld, the plaintiff’s attorney, told news sources Thursday that the case would be dropped so that his clients, all Holocaust survivors, would be able to collect from the compensation fund jointly established by the German government and German businesses.

"It was best to withdraw the case at this time so the Germans have no excuse whatsoever to withhold payment," Hausfeld said.

Both German chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, who is visiting the United States this week, and U.S. State Department spokesperson Richard Boucher, seemed pleased with the decision.

"Concern had been raised in Germany that this lawsuit would endanger legal peace for German companies sought by last year's Foundation agreement," Boucher said. "The dismissal of this lawsuit should alleviate any such concern."

Last July, the German government and the country's business community jointly established the "Remembrance, Responsibility and Future" foundation to oversee the compensation plan funds, said to amount to approximately US$5 billion.

News reports differ regarding how much German businesses have contributed to the fund. However, sources concur that Schroeder's government has yet to pay any of the matching funds it had promised, pending assurances that Germany's corporations will be immune to future lawsuits.

German businesses have stated publicly that the IBM lawsuit threatens the conditions of the accord.

Hausfeld termed the reason for his decision to drop the suit "pure blackmail on the part of the German foundation and industry."

Hausfeld said that the U.S. State Department promised to renew its efforts to obtain all the materials IBM archived during its period of apparent complicity with the Nazi regime from 1933 to 1945.

Said the State Department's Boucher: "The United States strongly supports the opening of all archives, public and private, relating to the Holocaust era in order to facilitate further research and encourage greater understanding of the Holocaust and its historical context."

Added Hausfeld: "If IBM opens their archives and turns all their materials over to us, that satisfies our objective."

IBM has already donated more than 10,000 pages of documents delineating the company's Nazi dealings to Hohenheim University in Germany and to New York University. However, Hausfeld has faulted Big Blue for the lack of public access to these papers and for their lack of comprehensiveness.

IBM company spokesperson Carol Makovich responded to Hausfeld's assertions by stating that the company has not had the opportunity to go through all its records, as it only hired an archivist three years ago.

Said Makovich: "What we have found, we've donated. If we are to find other relevant records, we'll donate them as well."

Edwin Black, whose book "IBM and the Holocaust" was published in February in tandem with Hausfeld's lawsuit, has asserted that there are probably 100,000 or more documents "scattered in basements and corporate archives around the United States and Europe."

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